Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1793 - December 23 2011

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1793 with a release date of Friday, December 23rd, 2011 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. France appears ready to modernize its Amateur Service rules; proposed Euro Zone laws could outlaw kit building and modifying ham radio gear; another major endorsement for a world-wide band at 500 KHz and the Do It Yourself Magic of Amateur Radio to premiere on the World Wide Web on December 27th. Find out the details are on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1793 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RADIO LAW: FRENCH REGULATOR MODERNIZING HAM RADIO LAWS

France appears to be on trhe verge of modernizing its amateur service rules. Newsline's Cheryl Lasek, K9BIK, is here with what's known so far:

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French telecommunications regulator ARCEP looks as if it is ready to permit French radio amateurs to use modern means of communication such as D-STAR. On December 14th several French ham radio groups received a draft amendment from ARCEP regarding new laws to govern that nations amateur and amateur satellite services.

If approved, these new rules will replace the Decision No. 2010-0537, which currently governs French amateur radio operations. The new rules appear to liberalize modes and interconnect options for ham radio in the digital age.

According to the latest word that we have, the rules change proposals will be available for a public discussion on the ARCEP website and those of participating amateur radio associations.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Cheryl Lasek, K9BIK, in Zion, Illinois.

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A careful study of text is already underway by a working group of French radio amateurs to formulate a joint response by January 20, 2012. (Southgate)

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RADIO LAW: EU ZONE THREAT TO KITS AND MODIFYING RADIOS ARISES

DL9KCE reports a threat to amateur radio kits and modified equipment in

the European Union. One arising from changes to the regions electromagnetic radiation or EMC exposure limits laws.

Currently amateur radio kits and modified equipment are specifically excluded from these directives but under the proposed changes they would be fully subjected to the EMC laws. The resulting high compliance costs could make it uneconomic to develop and sell kits in the European common market zone. More significant is that should radio amateur's want to modify equipment it appears they would also incur additional costs and bureaucratic red tape.

IARU Region 1 is expected to respond with a letter letter to lawmakersa in the very neart future.

(IARU R-1, Southgate)

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RESTRUCTURING: ANOTHER ENDORSEMENT FOR A NEW HAM BAND AT 500 KHZ

A new world wide allocation near 500 KHz has received yet another backer. Graham Kemp, VK4BB, of the WIA News reports from Down-Under:

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The proposal to allocate a part of the medium frequency band to the amateur service at the World Radio Conference in 2012 received a boost this week with the release of the Asia-Pacific Common Proposals that were developed at the 5th Meeting of the APT Conference Preparatory Group for WRC-12.

During this meeting the various nations of the Asia-Pacific region discussed many of issues that will be addressed at WRC12 and attempted to come to a regional consensus position.

The proposal of interest to the amateur service is to consider an allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band 415 to 526.5 kHz to the amateur service on a secondary basis, taking into account the need to protect existing services" and this proposal was supported by a comfortable margin of Asia-Pacific administrations responding to the voting request.

The successful development of a regional position supporting an amateur MF allocation increases the chances that the proposal will be accepted at WRC-12.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Graham Kemp, VK4BB, of the WIA News in Australia.

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If the proposal is accepted and acted upon at WRC-12, among other things it will mean another place for hams world wide to experiment with many emerging digital codecs that permit long distance communications with very low power levels. (WIA News)

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RADIO LAW: HAMS IN LEGANES SPAIN TURN TO FACEBOOK TO SAVE ANTENNAS

Hams in the city of Leganes, Spain are taking to Facebook in an attempt to try to retain the right to install and maintain their antennas.

Leganes is located about 11 km southwest of Spain's capital of Madrid. Its also where the city council has practically banned local radio amateurs from installing or retaining antenna systems. To bring this situation to the attention of the worlds of amateur radio outside Leganes, hams there have created a Facebook page at tinyurl.com/save-leganes-antennas.

The page is in Spanish but they ask that hams worldwide who have a Facebook account to go to it and click the "Like" button. The ham radio community of Leganes, Spain, hopes that a large turnout of support will help convince the town council to reverse its highly restrictive rulings. More in the Spanish language is on-line at www.fediea.org/news. (Southgate, FEDIEA)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: AMSAT STARTS FOX-1 FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN

AMSAT North America has kicked off a funding drive to build and launch its Fox 1 ham radio satellite. This as a direct replacement for Amsat Oscar 51.

AMSAT Vice-President of Engineering, Tony Monteiro, AA2TX says that Fox-1 will advance single-channel FM repeater satellite operation beyond the experience of AO-51. Called the next generation of AO-51 class satellites, Fox-1 is designed for longer operational life. It also will contain technologic breakthroughs that could not be attained when AO-51 was designed.

Among the new features, Fox-1 is designed to operate in sunlight without batteries once the battery system fails. This applies lessons learned from both the AO-51 and ARISSat One operations. In case of Internal Housekeeping Unit failure Fox-1 will continue to operate its FM repeater in a basic, 'zombie sat' mode. This means that thew repeater will remain on the air.

Fox-1 is being designed as the immediate replacement for AO-51. Its UHF to VHF Mode B transponder will make it even easier to work with the most modest of equipment. This means from the ground user's perspective, the same amateur radio equipment used for AO-51 may be used for Fox-1.

For more information on this new satellite and the fund to put it in space please visit www dot amsat dot org.

We will have more ham radio space related news later on in this weeks Amateur Radio Newsline report. (ANS)

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RADIO LAW: TOWERS VS BIRDS - AGAIN

The FCC has released interim regulations governing tower siteing that it says strike a balance between protecting migratory birds and the needs of industries that want to build communication towers, Amateur Radio Newsline's Heather Butera-Howell, KB3TZD, has the details:

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For years, broadcast engineers generally have said there's no proof that towers kill migratory birds, noting that they haven't seen piles of dead birds at the base of towers. Environmentalists disagree, saying towers, lights and guy wires pose a deadly threat.

In 2006, the commission asked for comments on the issue. Now the agency says evidence in the record suggests the likely impact of towers on migratory birds increases with tower height.

As researchers and attorneys predicted, towers over 450 feet in height will face more scrutiny. This will likely include the need to conduct an environmental assessment and allowing the public time to comment on where a new tower would be sited before construction. Methods of public notification could include publishing a newspaper notice or by going through a local zoning public notice process. An environmental notice is also required if an applicant changes the lighting of an existing tower to what is being termed as a less preferred style.

There is no official lighting ranking yet, however the commission says recommendations from federal wildlife protection agencies suggest that steady-burning red lights pose the greatest risk to migratory birds. Also that the differences among flashing and blinking lights are not statistically significant.

The FCC eventually intends to rank tower lighting in its final rule making on this issue but it has not said when it expects the regulations to be completed or their effective date.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Heather Butera-Howell, KB3TZD, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Nearly four years ago, a federal appeals court told the FCC its tower registration procedures fell short of meeting its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The FCC says that its interim regulations address those responsibilities. (FCC, RW)

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BREAK 1

With holiday wishes to all, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the N4MWA repeater serving

South-Eastern, Kentucky.

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO LAW: LIGHTSQUARED VS. GPS INDUSTRY - ROUND 6

The federal government has confirmed reports that tests conducted by a joint Technical Working Group show that signals from a nationwide wireless broadband network proposed by from LightSquared interfered with the majority of commercial GPS receivers that it tested. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in the newsroom with the latest on this controversary between the government and private industry that can affect every GPS user:

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A joint statement issued December 13th by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Defense confirms that testing did show that LightSquared signals caused harmful interference to the majority of tested general purpose GPS receivers. A separate battery of tests, conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration has shown the LightSquared like signals also interfered with Terrain Avoidance and Warning Systems. These rely heavily on GPS signals for reference to an aircraft's proximity to the ground.

In response, LightSquared executive vice-president Jeffrey Carlisle sent a letter on December 12th to FCC Secretary Marlene H. Dortch. In it, LightSquared offered to surrender authority over use of the upper part of its allotted spectrum to the National Executive Committee for Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing which is a government organization of military and commercial telecommunications officials. The move would effectively shut LightSquared out from utilizing that bandwidth, which is immediately adjacent to the spectrum used by G-P-S receivers.

But here is a catch. In exchange for the concession, the company asked for immediate access to the lower 10 MHz of the spectrum initially granted to LightSquared by the FCC in December 2010. LightSquared claims signals utilizing this bandwidth will not interfere with most GPS devices, provided they are fitted with narrow bandwidth sharp cutoff filters.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, Im Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in The City of Angels.

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That proposal from LightSquared was met with suspicion from the Coalition to Save our GPS. In a statement, coalition member the National Business Aviation Association noted LightSquared's offer doesn't alleviate the overall concern that its system will still interfere with GPS signals. As such, there exists the potential of jeopardizing the safety of countless pilots and others who rely on GPS

for navigation. (NABA)

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RADIO LAW: FCC ADOPTS CALM ACT RULES TO LIMIT TV COMMERCIAL VOLUME

The Federal Communications Commission has taken what it terms as a major step toward eliminating one of the most persistent problems of the television age. That being those overly loud commercials that the public seems to hate.

On Wednesday, December 14th the Commission adopted a Report and Order that implements the 2010 Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation or CALM Act. That's the statute in which Congress gave the Commission, for the first time, authority to address the problem of excessive commercial loudness.

The rules as adopted require that commercials have the same average volume as the programs they accompany. The rules also establish simple, practical ways for stations and multi-channel video programming distributors to demonstrate their compliance with the new regulations.

The CALM Act rules will become effective one year after the date of their adoption, or 13 December, 2012. This gives those broadcasters falling under the regulation until that date to be in full compliance. Equally important, it provides ample time for programmers and networks to provide their distributors with certifications stating the commercials that accompany their programming are fully compliant with these new rules.

While consumer complaints about loud commercials have diminished since 2009, the FCC expects that these new rules will reduce loudness complaints even further. (Media Network, FCC)

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TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE: DISABILITY.GOV NOW ON LINE

www.disability.gov is the new federal government website for comprehensive information on disability programs and services in communities nationwide. The site links to more than 14,000 resources from federal, state and local government agencies; academic institutions; and nonprofit organizations.

In the Technology section, can be found information on assistive and accessible technologies, emergency communications systems; the accessibility features of new technologies like smart phones; and guidelines and standards related to technology accessibility for people with disabilities. Information is by State using the drop-down menu located on the left side of any page on Disability.gov, to find local resources that can help you pay for your assistive technology needs.

Disability.gov is managed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy in collaboration with 21 federal agency partners, including the FCC. (FCC)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: SA AMSAT CALLS FOR PAPERS FOR SPACE SYMPOSIUM

The 2012 South Africa AMSAT Space Symposium will be held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on May 12th of 2012. The theme of the conference is "50 Years of Amateur Radio Satellites" and celebrating the launch of OSCAR 1 on December 12 1961.

Authors are invited to submit a brief synopsis of a proposed paper to be presented at the symposium. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2012. Send a synopsis as a word file attachment to saamsat (at) intekom (dot) co (dot) za. More about the symposium is on-line at www.amsatsa.org.za/ (SA-AMSAT)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: NEW RECORD FOR LA GRANGE 6 METER BUZZARD NET

December 19th set a new record for number of check-ins to the Georgia-based LaGrange 6 Meter Buzzard Net. According to Bob Yates, W4GCB, 32 stations from Georgia and Alabama showed up to take part. The station farthest from the net control was Thomas Glasze, K4SUS, who is in the north Georgia hills above the city of Ellijay. That's about 125 Airline miles from net control.

W4GCB says that the next goal for the net is to achieve 50 check-ins. The LaGrange 6 Meter Buzzard Net meets every Monday evening at 01:30 UTC on 50.155 Mhz, upper-sideband.

W4GCB notes that one of the best ways to protect our frequencies is to use them. He adds that keeping 6 meters active is not only worthwhile but is also a lot of fun. (W4GCB)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: HENNING SCHULZRINNE NAMED NEW FCC CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

Some names in the news. First up is Henning Schulzrinne who has been named as the new Chief Technology Officer at the FCC. An engineering fellow at the FCC since 2010 and a professor in the School of Engineering at Columbia University, Schulzrinne will guide the agency's work on technology and engineering issues, together with the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology.

The Columbia University professor reports to FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski. In his new role, Schulzrinne will advise on matters across the agency to ensure that FCC policies are driving technological innovation.

Schulzrinne is best known for development of key protocols that enable VoIP and other multimedia applications. He was a member of technical staff at AT&T Bell Laboratories, in Murray Hill New Jersey and an associate department head at GMD-Fokus in Berlin before joining Columbia University.

Schulzrinne will be based in the FCC's Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis. He replaces Douglas Sicker, who was appointed to the position in June of 2010. (FCC)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: ENGINEERING GREAT BOB ORBAN ON TWIT.TV

And if you are a ham interested in audio processing technology, then you are likely familiar with the name Bob Orban. His work has made his company a world leader in broadcast audio processing technology some of which has been adapted into the ham radio community. In fact, it's hard to find any radio station or other broadcast outlet where one of his famed Optimod processors is not installed.

Now you can get a chance to learn a bit about the technology that Bob Orban created by watching two recent video podcasts on Leo LaPorte's TWIT dot TV internet network. On December 14th Bob Orban appeared on the shows Triangulation and This Week in Radio Tech. Both are now available for download or on-line viewing. Take your web browser to twit dot tv and use the websites search facility with the name Bob Orban to locate them. If great sounding audio is your thing, then this will be two hours well spent. (ARNewsline(tm))

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BREAK 2

News never stops and neither do we. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: 137 KHZ SIGNAL GENERATED IN GERMANY SEEN IN ALASKA

Earlier on in this weeks newscast we reported on the latest support for a low-frequency ham radio allocation. Well, it's nearly 10 years since a low frequency signal from Europe has been received in Alaska. Now, the RF generated by Stefan Schaefer, DK7FC, of Heidelberg, Germany has been seen on 136.172 kHz at the remotely operated station of Laurence Howell, KL7UK near Wasilla, Alaska.

Howell also holds the UK call sign G4DMA used Spectrumlab software to decode Schaefer's transmission. Using this system, a full callsign using dual frequency 30 second per dot CW was seen.

This is believed to be a first for this type of transpolar path as it has to cross the Auroral zone twice. Conditions have to be very stable with low geomagnetic and Proton levels, and the path only appears to be open in the deepest part of the winter.

KL7UK who is part of the WE2XPO low frequency experimental license group is using a 2 turn directional K9AY array and a remotely tuned Icom R75 receiver controlled from his residence in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. DK7FC in Germany had an Effective Radiated Power of only a few Watts.

The last signals across this path were seen were in 2003. At that time G3AQC, G3LDO and DF6NM made the rare path. More about these low frequency transmissions is on-line at kl7uk.com. (KL7UK)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: THREE ASTRO-HAMS HEADED TO THE ISS

Three more hams may already be on their way to the Interrnatioal Space Station. NASA astronaut Don Pettit, KD5MDT, Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko, RN3DX, and Dutch astronaut Andre Kuipers, PI9ISS were scheduled for a December 21st launch to the orbiting outpost on 13:16 UTC. By the time you hear this they will likely be on-orbit. The three hams are headed for a half-year mission aboard the I-S-S as members of Expeditions 30 and 31. (ANS, Spaceflight Now)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: ARISSAT-1 MISSION MAY END DECEMBER 31

ARISSat One may fall out of orbit sooner than originally predicted. Jim De Young, N8OQ, reports via the Amsat on-line Bulletin Board that the new estimated date for the re- entry of the ARISSat One into the Earth's atmosphere is December 31st, plus or minus about three days. .

As any satellite has descended to lower altitudes the atmospheric drag has increased significantly. This latest prediction For ARISSat One's demise uses solar data through this past December 14th and only includes orbital height data gathered between December 9th and the 14th. (ANS)

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RADIO FROM SPACE: RUSSIAN PHOBOS-GRUNT MAY DEORBIT IN EARLY JANUARY

And ARISSat One is not the only satellite expected to fall from orbit in the near future. Russia's troubled Phobos-Grunt probe, which has been stuck in the wrong orbit for more than a month, appears to be headed for a fiery and uncontrolled fall back to Earth in early January.

Space debris tracking experts are predicting that giant Russian-built spacecraft will re-enter Earth's atmosphere on January 9th but at present, the forecast includes an uncertainty of plus or minus 5 1/2 days. In fact, some space debris analysts are even suggesting that the spacecraft could see its demise as early as January 1st or 2nd.

Phobos-Grunt was designed to land on Phobos, one of Mars two moons. The mission was slated to gather rock and soil samples from Phobos and

return them to Earth in 2014.

But after shortly being boosted into space on November 9th Moscow time, the spacecraft failed to send itself toward the red planet. Russian, European and U.S. deep space network receivers were mobilized in hopes of salvaging the marooned probe, but flight controllers have struggled to regain control of Phobos-Grunt with no success to date. (SPACE)

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ON THE AIR: HAMS IN KAZAKHSTAN CELEBRATE NATIONS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

On the air, hams in Kazakhstan are celebrating their country's 20th anniversary with the use of special callsigns as well as issuing a certificate to commemorate the event. The 48 special callsigns along with QSL routing and commemorative certificate information is listed at kw dot cqun dot kz. Kazakhstan is best known in ham radio circles as the home of the Bikenour Cosmodrome from where a number of ham radio satellites and crews to the International Space Station have been launched. (G0SFJ)

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DX

In DX, members of the NN6NN RTTY Team will be activating PJ2N from the Signal Point Station on Curacao Island during the 2012 ARRL RTTY Round-Up. The date for this one is January 7th and 8th with the team operating as a multi-op high power entry. QSL direct to NN6NN or electronically using Logbook of the World.

A team consisting of 12 European operators will be active as HU2DX from the Capricho Beach House in El Salvador, between January 29th and February 10th. Operations will be on 160 through 10 meters with the main focus on the lower bands. QSL via DH7WW either direct or via the bureau. More information is on-line at www dot hu2dx dot de.

AA9A and W4OWY will be active from Antigua as V25AA and V25WY, respectively, between February 13th and the 22nd. Their operations will be on 160 through 6 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL via their home callsigns.

Lastly, a group of Polish operators are planning to be active as PJ7PT from Sint Maarten between March 5th to the 18th. Their operations will be on 160 through 6 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL via SP9PT. More about this operation is on-line at www.pj7pt.com

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: "THE DIY MAGIC OF AMATEUR RADIO" ARRL VIDEO TO BE RELEASED VIA DECEMBER 27th AND DEC 3rd NETCASTS

And finally this week, two dates to mark down on your ham radio social calendar. The first is this Tuesday, December 27th at 8:30 p.m.

Eastern time. That's when the ARRL will present an on-line premiere screening of its new video titled The DIY Magic of Amateur Radio.

To accomplish this the League has teamed up with Tom Medlin, W5KUB, who will be streaming it from his website at w5kub.com. The video will also be released earlier that day on-line at the ARRL's own website at www.arrl.org and on the ARRL video pages on YouTube dot com. All three are a part of a new ARRL public relations campaign to interest the nations maker and hacker community in our world of ham radio.

Then a week later on January 3rd at 9 p.m. Eastern, the shows producer Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, along with Director Dave Bell, W6AQ and writer Henry Feinberg, K2SSQ, will be the guests of Bob Heil, K9EID, and Gordon West, WB6NOA. This on their weekly TWIT dot TV video podcast known as Ham Nation.

Bell, Feinberg and Pasternak will give you a behind the scenes look at how the DIY Magic of Amateur Radio video was conceived as well as how it was put together using the very latest digital video production techniques. You will also get to see the video in its entirety.

Look for this live netcast at 9 PM Eastern on Tuesday, January 3rd at live.twit.tv. If you miss it, wait about 24 hours for it to be posted at twit.tv/hn. (ARRL, ARNewsline(tm))

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News Australia's W-I-A News and TWIT dot TV, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline(at) arnewsline (dot) org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), 28197 Robin Avenue, Santa Clarita California, 91350

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Burt Hicks wishing you a Merry Christmas, a Happy Chanukah, a joyous Quanza and a most preposterous New Year. 73, see you next week and we thank you for listening.

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